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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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The Honorable Duncan Hunter
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hunter:

I write to urge you to convene a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee on the President's recently announced decision to station 6,000 National Guard troops on our nation's southern border. It is my understanding that the White House staff developed this initiative without consulting with the leadership of the Armed Services Committee. I believe that it is important that our committee, which has extensive expertise both in military and border issues, has the opportunity to explore this critical issue in a thorough, bipartisan manner.

Together with Congressman Solomon Ortiz, I have written to the President and also to Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Paul McHale asking that they provide answers to the following questions.

- Which troops will be deployed and how will this deployment affect the ongoing commitment of 24,000 Army National Guard troops in Iraq and Afghanistan? How will this affect the 24-month call-up restriction?
- Under what authority will troops be deployed?
- What is the projected cost of a troop deployment to the Southern border, and have funds been identified for allocation to this new mission?
- What are the rules of engagement under which these troops will serve?
- Which agency will lead the operations? Will military troops be under the control of the civilian leadership of the Border Patrol which has the primary responsibility for securing our nation's borders?
- What provisions have been made for the detention of persons in the border region by military members?

- What plans have been made to ensure that interoperable communications are available to allow military and civilian law enforcement personnel to communicate?
- Will Air Force or the other military branches provide air support? Has the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for aerial surveillance been coordinated with the Federal Aviation Administration and will UAV aircraft including the Air Force's Predator be available to support this troop deployment in light of the shortage of these air vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan?

As you and your staff work with the Department of Defense to develop a witness list for a hearing on the use of National Guard troops on the border, I urge you to consider requesting individuals who will be able to answer these critical questions.

Thank you for your consideration of this request for a hearing. At a time when National Guard troops are stretched thin with deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan and with the hurricane season nearing, I believe that it is important that our Committee carefully study the White House decision to use these forces for border enforcement activities.

Sincerely,



Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress

CSR/jtm